

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10

PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 NIC-01

AID-20 DRC-01 CU-04 /168 W

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R 270900Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4918

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0836

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, GB

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM GABONESE FEDERATION OF FREE  
UNIONS

REF: LIBREVILLE 0790

STATE 187713

1. SUMMARY. IN EXPRESSING DESIRE CONTACT US LABOR  
MOVEMENT, PRESIDENT OF NEWLY FORMED CONFEDERATION  
GABONAISE DES SYNDICATS LIBRES (CGSL) DESCRIBED HIS  
ORGANIZATION AS AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF GABONESE  
WORKERS. HE LABELED RIVAL FEDERATION SYNDICALE  
GABONAISE (FSG) AS DOCILE CREATURE OF PRESIDENT BONGO'S  
RULING PARTI DEMOCRATIQUE GABONAISE (PDG). CGSL  
CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH ITS RIGHT OF  
EXISTENCE IN GABNESE COURTS. CHARGE SUGGESTED THAT  
UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, CONTACT WITH AMERICAN LABOR  
MVEMENT BE DEFERRED UNTIL GABONESE SET THEIR LABOR  
HOUSE IN ORDER. END SUMMARY.

2. G.GOBER WORA, PRESIDENT OF CGSL, CALLED ON CHARGE  
SEPTEMBER 25. CHARGE BEGAN DISCUSSION NOTING  
EXISTENCE OF FSG AND ASKED WORA FOR SKETCH OF GABONESE  
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LABOR MOVEMENT INCLUDING DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN FSG AND CGSL.

3. WORA SAID FSG FOUNDED IN 1969. HE WAS ELECTED FIRST PRESIDENT. FSG CONTINUED FUNCTION AS OFFICIAL UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR ENTIRE GABONESE LABOR MOVEMENT UNTIL JANUARY 13, 1973 WHEN DIRECTOR OF LABOR ACCOMPANIED BY ARMED POLICE BRIGADE CAME TO FSG HEADQUARTERS, EXPELLED EXISTING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND IMPOUNDED THE FILES. ACCORDING TO WORA, NEW ELECTIONS WERE ORDERED BY DIRECTOR OF LABOR ON JANUARY 14. BECAUSE OF ATMOSPHERE OF INTIMIDATION AND FACT UNION HALL "PACKED" WITH GOVERNMENT SYMPATHIZERS, WORA AND COLLEAGUES REFUSED TO VOTE. THEY WERE TOLD TO LEAVE BUILDING. ENSUING VOTE LED TO ELECTION OF GUAMBUALT AS PRESIDENT AND NZAOU AS SEC GEN. WORA SAID THAT FORCIBLE REORGANIZATION OF FSG WAS DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO THROTTLE INDEPENDENT LABOR MOVEMENT IN GABON AND MAKE LABOR SUBSERVIENT TO COUNTRY'S SOLE POLITICAL PARTY, THE PDG. ON JULY 30, WORA AND MEMBERS OF OUSTED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORMED CGSL BASING THEIR RIGHT TO ORGANIZE INDEPENDENT UNION ON LAW 1-61 OF FEBRUARY 21, 1961. IN ORDER TO CONFIRM STATUS OF CGSL MATTER THEN PRESENTED TO GABONESE ADMINISTRATIVE CHAMBER (LOWER SUPREME COURT) WHICH DECLARED IT NOT COMPETENT TO RENDER JUDGMENT. CASE HAS BEEN BEFORE JUDICIARY CHAMBER (HIGHER SUPREME COURT) EVER SINCE.

4. WORA THEN DELIVERED HIMSELF OF DIATRIBE AGAINST CURRENT REGIME STATING INTER ALIA:

A. PDG CANNOT DEFEND RIGHTS OF WORKERS BECAUSE IT IS CONTROLLED BY THE WEALTHY. SINCE FSG HAS COME WHOLLY UNDER PARTY, IT HAS FAILED TO PUSH FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY.

B. THERE IS NO SOCIAL JUSTICE IN GABON. WORKERS LIVE IN A STATE OF FEAR AND ARE UNDERPAID, MEDICAL CARE IS MARGINAL, AND A GOOD EDUCATION IS A PRIVILEGE OF THE RICH.

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5. CHARGE NOTED LONG HISTORY OF US LABOR MOVEMENT'S ASSISTANCE TO NASCENT FOREIGN UNIONS AND MUTUAL BENEFITS FROM SUCH ASSOCIATIONS. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, CHARGE SAID IT APPEARED GABONESE LABOR MOVEMENT CURRENTLY IN THROES OF JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES CHARGE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR US LABOR GROUP TO RENDER ASSISTANCE WHICH COULD BE CONSTRUED AS INTERFERENCE IN GABONESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS. CHARGE

SUGGESTED THAT SUBJECT MIGHT BE REVIEWED AFTER GABONESE SUPREME COURT RENDERS DECISION ON BONA FIDE OF CGSL AND IN EFFECT ESTABLISHES IF ONE OR BOTH CONTENDING UNIONS HAVE RIGHT TO REPRESENT GABONESE LABOR.

6. COMMENT. WORA STRIKES ME AS A FIGHTER AND AS ONE THOROUGHLY CONVINCED OF THE RIGHTNESS OF HIS CAUSE. HE IS CLEARLY OPPOSED TO BONGO, PARTICULARLY LATTER'S LABOR POLICY (SEE ALSO LIBREVILLE'S A-007, FEBRUARY 7, 1973, PARAGRAPH III). UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, THINK IT BEST WE KEEP WORA AT ARM'S LENGTH. BONGO WOULD BE FURIOUS AT ANY US (OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL) SUPPORT FOR WHAT HE PROBABLY CONSIDERS AN OUTLAW ORGANIZATION. SUGGEST THAT DEPARTMENT INFORM AALC OF SUBSTANCE OF THIS MESSAGE AND CAUTION AALC AGAINST CONTACTS WITH CGSL. DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH POINT OUT INAPPROPRIATENESS OF CONTACTS WITH ORGANIZATION WHOSE LEGAL STATUS CURRENTLY BEING ADJUDICATED IN GABONESE COURTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, AALC WILL PROBABLY NOT WISH TO BE CHUMMY WITH FSG GIVEN ITS STATUS AS NON-AUTONOMOUS ADJUNCT TO GABON'S SOLE AND RULING PARTY. COUNTRYMAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 27 SEP 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973LIBREV00836  
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**Document Unique ID:** 00  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
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**Line Count:** 138  
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**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** LIBREVILLE 0790  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 JAN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <28-Jan-2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM GABONESE FEDERATION OF FREE UNIONS  
**TAGS:** ELAB, GB  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005